

# Minimum wage rises for Michigan workers

Gabriella Payeur  
News Reporter

On Feb. 20 and 21, two bills were passed by Michigan lawmakers addressing an increase to minimum wage, tipped wage and sick time laws. These bills amended existing laws and were signed into law by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on Feb. 21.

The bills went into effect immediately and will slowly increase minimum and tipped wages through 2031. The first change happened on Feb. 21, when minimum wage was increased from \$10.56 an hour to \$12.48 an hour. Tipped wages remained 38% of minimum wage, but increased to about \$4.74.

On Jan. 1, 2026, minimum wage will increase to \$13.73, with tipped wages 40% of that, about \$5.49.

Then, on Jan. 1, 2027, it will increase to \$15, with tipped wages being 42% of that, about \$6.30.

From 2028 onward, the minimum wage will take the previous year’s wage and increase to adjust for inflation. The tipped wage will increase about 2% each year until 2035 when it will be 60% of minimum wage. Minors under 18 will be paid 85% of the minimum wage. For a full chart of the changes brought about by these laws, check out the Michigan General Requirements chart.

These changes come after a several-years long battle. In 2018, the Improved Workforce Opportunity Wage Act, known as the Wage Act, and the Earned Sick Time Act were put on the Nov. 2018 ballot. These were citizen-led proposals that collected enough signatures to be put on the ballot. They were sponsored by Mothering Justice, Michigan One Fair Wage, and Michigan Time to Care.

However, they did not make it to the ballot as they were preemptively passed by the Republican-led legislature. The same legislature went on to scale them back after they were passed.

In July 2024, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled that it was unconstitutional to amend citizen-led proposals. This reinstated the

proposals and made it so they would go into effect Feb. 21, 2025. Both political parties did not support the proposals as they were.

This led to Senate Bill 8, as described above, being passed and signed into law.

This bill affects all Michigan employers, including Eastern Michigan University.

Caz Buxton, the Director of Media for EMU Student Government, said they do not know much about the wage increase, nor how it will affect them. They currently earn about \$12 an hour, the new minimum wage.

“I’m not sure how the increase affects me,” Buxton said. “I just take what they give me.”

Steven Connoles, a communications major at EMU, is set to start a new job in mid-March. While it is not an on-campus job, he will be making minimum wage.

“I guess it’s just really nice to be able to make an extra \$2,” Connoles said.

# "Building a Community of Caring" is prioritizing mental health at EMU

Gabriella Payeur  
News Reporter

Associate professor at Eastern Michigan University Ronald Flowers was inspired by a personal loss to create a new initiative called “Building a Community of Caring.”

This initiative focused on destigmatizing mental health and bringing a wellness-based approach to classrooms. Those involved in the project develop and help implement plans to improve the mental and behavioral wellness of students and faculty across campus. Flowers said that by the Fall 2025 semester, their plans should start to be seen.

“Lots of little things add up to shift and change the culture within an organization,” Flowers said.

The first thing students will see, and may have already seen, is the branding.

A little penguin holding a green star with EMU’s Block E appears in 75% of buildings across campus, Flowers said. “You Belong” banners have also been placed and can be seen in buildings such as the Student Center. Faculty also had the chance to order different merchandise, with around 125 orders, according to Flowers.

Another recent task has been a Means Reduction Audit. Flowers said this is the process of going around to different locations on campus and identifying ways students could potentially harm themselves. Safety measures are then put in place, such as locking doors and removing access to harmful chemicals in labs. Posters that read “We Care” and include mental health resources have also been displayed in these locations.

On campus, the task force also works with the Rec/IM to generate programs and ideas that promote wellness.

Another resource that is in the works is Wellness Wednesdays, which will have a feed in the Eagle App with wellness advice, resources, suggestions, activities and writing prompts.

Currently, the task force behind “Building a Community of Caring” is working with EMU’s IT department and computer science students to create a web portal that will be linked on EMU’s website. The page will include educational videos and materials and information about campus resources.

Additionally, Flowers said that the task force will be visiting every department to advise them on how to support students, including mental health first aid training and new faculty orientation. The first aid training will also be available to students.

Flowers also collaborates with EMU’s Department of Public Safety and Police Chief Matthew Lige on clarifying how mental health crises will be handled by the police if 911 is called

and the importance of de-escalation procedures.

A learning community will take place in the Fall of the 2025-2026 school year for students and staff to better understand “Building a Community of Caring”, and start more outreach.

The task force is not only focusing on students, Flowers emphasized. An initiative will begin a newsletter for families of students, with information and resources on how to best support their students and themselves.

“The caregivers need care, too,” Flowers said.

To accomplish these goals, “Building a Community of Caring” is using the Flinn Foundation Grant they received last year to pay for services, equipment, time and more.

The program has several partners. JED is their main partner, and they are also working to partner with The Steve Fund, which promotes mental well-being among students of color, and The Trevor Project, which promotes mental well-being among LGBTQ+ students.

While there have, and continue to be, funding changes at the federal level, Flowers said he is not worried about these affecting upcoming plans or the future of the initiative at all.

“Resources are always tight at any large institution, and mental health has been established as a pretty strong priority,” Flowers said. “I don’t take no for an answer. We may not have the money to do what we want to do the way we want to do it, but let’s find a way to get it done.”

As a former administrator, Flowers has studied the impact of mental health on students.

He cited the June 2024 Gallup poll that asked why students chose to drop out of postsecondary education. The poll found that 74% of respondents cited emotional stress as a very or moderately important reason. Additionally, personal mental health reasons were ranked as very or moderately important by 64% of poll takers.

This ties to what Flowers calls return on investment. If an institution can keep already enrolled students, funds from tuition are greater than if the institution were to recruit new students, and the small investment into mental health will be worth it.

Flowers said he believes that the faculty at EMU truly care about their students and want to see them succeed. Getting a degree can be life-changing, and if mental health is what is holding the student back, he wants to be able to provide more to help them and keep them going.

For teachers, he said, this does not have to be a compromise. It is as simple as noticing when a class is zoning out in the middle of a lecture and taking two minutes to do a mindfulness activity and get refocused.

As for right now, “Building a Community of



Located on the first floor of Downing Hall, a "We Care" poster is hung on the wall. This is one of the first initiatives by Building a Community of Caring, established by Ron Flowers in 2024.

Jeffrey Ellingsworth/The Eastern Echo

Caring” will be hosting a mental health summit with Campus Life on May 22 with a speaker from JED and a time for conversations about wellness and mental health.

Flowers also collaborates with EMU’s Department of Public Safety and Police Chief Matthew Lige on clarifying how mental health crises will be handled by the police if 911 is called and the importance of de-escalation procedures.

With many future plans including informal opportunities to talk about mental health and wellness and LBC-approved peer mentorship roles, “Building a Community of Caring” is here to stay and expand.

Flowers said he loves to talk with different people and student organizations on what is and is not working, as well as what they would like to see added. The task force plans to look at this feedback over four years and adjust where needed from there.

“We are open to any and all ideas,” Flowers said. “I don’t say no to anything, we always listen and think about it even if we don’t act on it right away.”

Flowers encourages anyone with questions, feedback, or ideas to email him at rflowers@emich.edu, or the initiative at we\_care@emich.edu.



# The Eastern Echo

The Eastern Echo serves the Eastern Michigan University and Ypsilanti-area communities as an independent student-operated newspaper. Founded in 1881 as The Normal News, The Echo distributes weekly printed editions on campus and throughout the surrounding community during the fall and winter academic semesters; and publishes year-round on the web. Contents are subject to copyright and may not be reproduced without prior written consent of the newspaper.

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## THE ECHO MISSION

The Eastern Echo informs the Eastern Michigan University and Ypsilanti community by highlighting newsworthy content in a fair, accurate and timely manner.

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Print editions published Tuesdays from late August to early May are available in racks or on tables in all academic buildings on the EMU campus, and at dozens of businesses in the community.

Among those businesses are:

- Sweetwaters on Cross St
- The Golden Egg
- Domino's
- and more!

Want to have copies of The Eastern Echo delivered to your Ypsilanti business? Email advertising@easternecho.com!

## CORRECTIONS

The Eastern Echo corrects mistakes. If we got it wrong, we want to make it right. Errors should be brought to the attention of the Editor-in-Chief by email: editor@easternecho.com

# Weekly Calendar


| TUESDAY<br>MARCH 11   | WEDNESDAY<br>MARCH 12  | THURSDAY<br>MARCH 13  | FRIDAY<br>MARCH 14 | SATURDAY<br>MARCH 15  | SUNDAY<br>MARCH 16 | MONDAY<br>MARCH 17   |
|---|--|---|--------------------|---|--------------------|--|
| <p>WOMEN OF COLOR FEMINISMS AND LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM<br/>STUDENT CENTER BALLROOM<br/>2 P.M. - 5:30 P.M.</p>  | <p>STUDENT SUCCESS AND SUPPORT WEEK ADVISEMENT<br/>PUTNAM RESIDENCE HALL<br/>4 P.M. - 7 P.M.</p>  | <p>PI DAY<br/>PRAY HARROLD ROOM 411<br/>12:00 P.M. - 2 P.M.</p>          |                    | <p>SALINE WINTER INDOOR FARMERS MARKET<br/>7265 N ANN ARBOR ST.<br/>9 A.M. - 1 P.M.</p>  |                    | <p>MARCHING BAND DRUMLINE AUDITION CLINIC<br/>ALEXANDER MUSIC BUILDING<br/>5 P.M. - 7 P.M.</p>  |
| <p>TINKER'S TOY DRIVE<br/>HONORS COLLEGE RECEPTION HALL<br/>3 P.M. - 5 P.M.</p>                              | <p>BIG ASTRONOMY UNIVERSITY PLANETARIUM<br/>7:30 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.</p>                             | <p>ETIQUETTE DINNER<br/>STUDENT CENTER ROOM 352<br/>4 P.M. - 6 P.M.</p>  |                    |   |                    | <p>MASTERING THE INTERNSHIP HUNT<br/>HALLE LIBRARY ROOM G-09<br/>5:30 P.M. - 7 P.M.</p>         |

# Scoop's Forecast


55°  34° Tuesday, March 11


47°  29° Wednesday, March 12

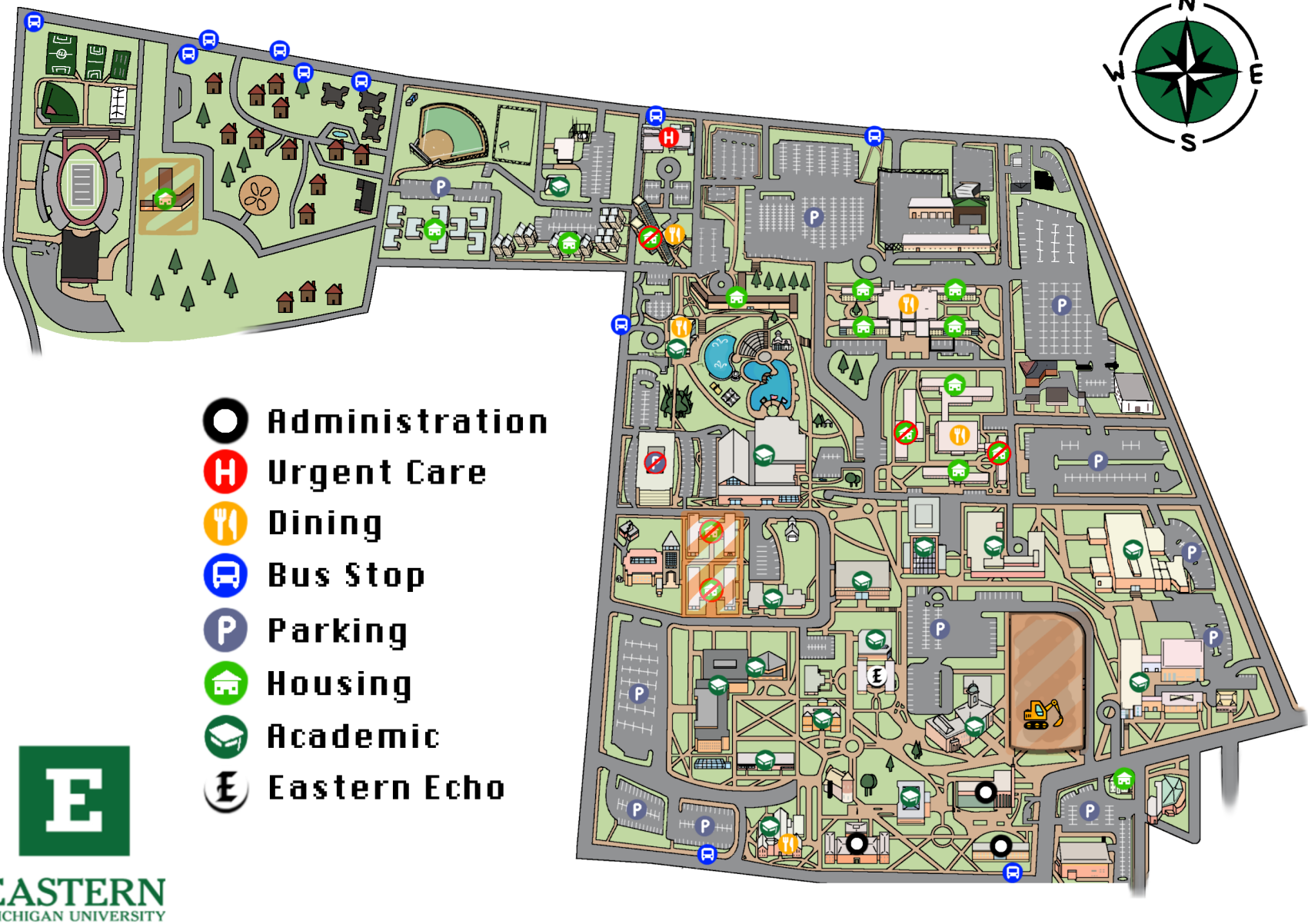
57°  31° Thursday, March 13

68°  38° Friday, March 14

66°  53° Saturday, March 15

53°  31° Sunday, March 16

44°  27° Monday, March 17





# EMU celebrates 50 years of Women’s, Gender Studies

AnnaBelle Favre  
News Reporter

In 1975, Eastern Michigan University introduced its first Women’s Studies program. EMU was the first university in Michigan to include a minor in Women’s Studies.

Over the past 50 years, the program has grown significantly, now offering a major, minor, and the only master’s degree program in the state. It has also expanded into Women’s and Gender Studies, incorporating a broader perspective on gender issues. For half a century, these classes have empowered students to advocate for causes they believe in, including reproductive rights, domestic violence awareness, LGBTQ+ rights, and racial equality.

To celebrate this milestone, the Women’s and Gender Studies program invited Congresswoman Haley Stevens to speak on campus on March 7, 2025.

The event, held in the McKenny Ballroom, was packed with advocates of all ages supporting the growing program.

EMU President James Smith opened the event.

“Congresswoman Stevens is not the only esteemed speaker that WAGS has hosted at EMU: Gloria Steinem, Maya Angelou, five other members of the U.S. House of Representatives, and many more have inspired students at Eastern to reach for their goals and fight for equality,” Smith said.

He spoke about his passion for minority rights and how improving our Women’s and Gender Studies program could strengthen the entire community.

He also emphasized the importance of combining academic learning with practical experience and career readiness, a goal WAGS is currently focusing on.

“We know who we are, we know who Eastern is, and we need to speak loudly,” Smith said.

Following the opening remarks, Congresswoman Stevens participated in a fireside chat-style interview.

She described herself as “a believer in STEM from top to bottom.

“I support women in STEM careers and women in nontraditional careers,” Stevens said.

She explained how her passion

for history and philosophy sparked her interest in public service and how philosophy courses helped her understand the deeper meaning behind policy.

“I was inspired to make change in my community,” Stevens said.

Stevens wasn’t always planning on running for congress, but she said a friend inspired her.

“One day, a good friend called me and said she saw a posting about running, and she thought I’d be good



for it. I thought if he [Donald Trump] can become president, maybe I can be in congress,” Stevens said.

In 2018, Stevens, along with 35 other women, was elected into congress. That year remains the most women to ever win House seats in a single election.

“Women just ran and won,” Stevens said. “They didn’t just run on women’s issues, because all issues are women’s issues. They ran on the merit of their talent.”

After her election, Stevens worked to address the gender gap in STEM fields.

On December 24, 2019, President Donald Trump signed the Building Blocks of STEM Act into law.

“Six years ago, that wasn’t a controversial thing, and it still shouldn’t

be,” Stevens said.

Stevens also offered advice to the students in the room.

“What we have to do is be sneaky and crafty,” Stevens said. “Con the conman.”

She recalled how, in her district, the LGBTQ+ resource center Affirmations needed funding but knew the government would resist anything LGBTQ-related.

“I said there’s an essential center in my community that needed some

infrastructure funds, and they just did it,” Stevens said.

She encouraged the EMU community to support each other and check in on their neighbors. She also stressed the importance of mentorship, both as a mentor and a mentee.

“It doesn’t have to be a suffocating thing; it can just be a suggestion,” Stevens said.

To celebrate the work that Women’s and Gender Studies is currently doing at EMU, two students were asked to speak at this conference.

To highlight the work currently being done in the Women’s and Gender Studies program at EMU, two students were invited to speak.

Gabby Griffin, a sophomore

majoring in psychology and minoring in Women’s and Gender Studies, shared some of her experiences.

“My classes in WAGS have helped me understand the balance of power and how patriarchy affects everyone,” Griffin said. “I am so grateful for the mentorship Women’s and Gender Studies has given me.”

Griffin, who has a paid internship through the WAGS program, encouraged donations to support such opportunities.

“Every student at EMU, regardless of program, should gain experience in their field outside of the classroom,” Griffin said.

Jesse John, a senior presidential scholar majoring in psychology with a minor in WAGS, is the founder of Changing the Cycle at EMU, a program that provides free menstrual products in all campus bathrooms.

Funded by grants for the past few years, John announced that next year, Changing the Cycle will be fully funded by Eastern Michigan University.

“Knowledge is never neutral,” John said. “It can challenge oppression and change the status quo. Do something with it.”

The event concluded with remarks from Dr. Rhonda Longworth and Dr. Daryl Barton, who shared their personal experiences at EMU.

Longworth recalled being told it was impossible to have a loving relationship, be a good mother, and have a career all at once.

“At EMU, I was supported in all of the personal and career choices I made,” Longworth said.

Longworth has spent 31 years at EMU, advocating for a stronger Women’s and Gender Studies program.

Barton, who was involved in the very first discussions about the program 50 years ago, remembered when the entire department fit in a single file cabinet.

“I’ve been here from day one,” Barton said. “We all supported each other, and we did it all for free, which caught the administration’s attention.”

She expressed pride in the program.

“It’s been 50 years, but we are still new,” Barton said. “This program is just beginning.”

# What's the move? March 11-17

Echo Staff

It’s Student Success and Support week at Eastern Michigan University, and the folks from Academic Advising, Career Services, the Holman Success Center, and the Disability Resource Center are hosting various events and meet and greets.

**The Women of Color Feminisms and Leadership Symposium - March 11**

Scheduled from 2 to 5:30 p.m. in the Student Center Ballroom, this year’s symposium focuses on holistic wellness, resilience, and transformative action. Participants will explore strategies to overcome systemic challenges, enhance well-being, and drive social change. All are welcome. Attendance is approved for Learning Beyond the Classroom credit.

**Get creative at Tinker’s Toy Drive - March 11**

Students can log community service hours while hanging out with Tinker from 3 to 5 p.m. in the Honors College Reception Hall, room 107.

Tinker is Eastern’s facility dog, who will be at the Honors College to greet participating students. Those interested in attending will be making braided dog toys that will be donated to the Human Society of Huron Valley.

**Student Success and Support Week - March 12**

Representatives from Academic Advising, Career Services, the Holman Success Center, and the Disability Resource Center will be available from 4 to 7 p.m. in the Putnam Residence Hall. Contact Vheena Villareal at [vvillare@emich.edu](mailto:vvillare@emich.edu) for more information.

**Big Astronomy - March 12**

This event at the University Planetarium in the Mark Jefferson Science complex showcases the diverse collaboration of scientists who open our minds to the expanse of the cosmos. The show is from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Admission is \$5, and tickets can be purchased through the university’s online box office.

**River Givers Gathering - March 13**

Celebrate the 60th anniversary of the start of the Huron River Watershed Council during the River Giver’s Gathering from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Corner Brewery in Ypsilanti. The council is a nonprofit coalition of residents, businesses and local government working to protect the Huron River and its waterways.

The gathering event includes an update on activities and an awards presentation. Light refreshments will be available; Arbor Brews will be available for purchase.

**Pi Day at the Math Lab - March 13**

In celebration of Pi Day, students can visit Pray Harrold 411 for a mini pie and a visit with the math lab.Tutors and advisors will be giving away the pies while sharing information about upcoming math classes and events. For more information, contact Sara Lynne Schultz at [sschult5@emich.edu](mailto:sschult5@emich.edu).

**Student Success and Support Week - March 13**

Meet representatives from Academic Advising, Career Services, the Holman Success Center, and the Disability Resource Center from 1 to 3 p.m. on the second floor of Pray Harrold. To celebrate Student Success and Support Week, the representatives will be there to help students and provide ideas for success.

**Internship 101: Mastering the Internship Hunt - March 17**

Representatives from the university Advising and Career Development Center, and from the Holman Success Center are joining forces to help students navigate the steps to landing an internship. Experts will be on hand to help students search for internships and network like a pro.

The event is from 5:30 to 7 p.m. in Room G-09 at Halle Library on campus. Refreshments will be served. Students are encouraged to RSVP through this Google form.

Have an event to include in the What’s the Move? Send your information to [news@easternecho.com](mailto:news@easternecho.com)

# Students, faculty come together to win big at Kings Casino

Joseph McFarland  
Staff Reporter

The sounds of cards shuffling and roulette wheels clattering filled the air in the Student Center Ballroom as EMU students and staff made their plays in the hope of hitting a jackpot during the annual Kings Casino event. Even though the currency was fake, the prizes were real.

Hosted by Campus Life and the Kings of Color student organization, the Kings Casino is a social event described as a way for students to play casual casino games and engage with others.

Campus Life Activities Coordinator Juniper Bamrick said the purpose of the Kings Casino is to give back to Eastern Michigan University’s community through engagement with people who students don’t normally get to meet.

“This year, we added faculty and staff, so they get to interact with them in a different way,” Bamrick said.

University staff who participated included Title IX Coordinator Sarah Olejniczak, Chief Diversity Officer Dwight Hamilton and several other faculty members who worked the tables where students played games of chance.

Each student who signed up for free entry received 500 mock dollars, which were used to obtain casino chips needed

to play a variety of games. The choices included Blackjack, Texas Hold ‘Em Poker, wheel spins and Roulette.

Neriah Johnson, the Court of Queens President of Kings of Color, said the majority of students on campus have never gotten to experience casino games in person.

“A lot of people do find them interesting, just because they were never put in that environment,” Johnson said. “But they have always wanted to know how to play them, so this is a great way to teach them these games as well.”

Bamrick said the mock money added a benefit. The student could learn to play without any real currency involved.

Plus, if someone ran out of chips to play during the event, they could earn more by playing video games, such as Super Smash Brothers Ultimate and Mario Kart 8 Deluxe, where the winner would receive 100 mock dollars.

Once the event ended, the chips earned through winning the casino games could be cashed in for prizes, including Kings of Color-sponsored hanging dice, water bottles, drawstring bags, and even a raffle for a grand prize selection of board games.

Johnson said that she likes the way Campus Life holds events and handles things professionally, which was part of the reason why Kings of Color

decided to have a collaboration with the university department.

“They are all about giving back to the student societies, so we feel like Campus Life resonates with the needs of the students,” Johnson said. “Just to be able to get out and do something and de-stress after a long day of classes, stuff like that.”

One of the students who attended the event, Kyle Thibeault, said he enjoyed his time at the event with his friends.

“It’s a really good way to enjoy an



amazing experience like Vegas, and learn what gambling is like in a fun way,” Thibeault said. “It’s a great way to relieve stress, too.”

Student Brendan Winters said the event reminds him of the time he used to watch the World Poker Tournament with his dad.

“I would play games online with him, and being able to come here and play these games for fun was really enjoyable, and I hope they expand on it even more,” Winters said.





# 6 skills employers want you to have

Allie Beecher  
Staff Reporter

College is a critical time for students to start preparing for their long-term careers.

Despite the abundance of career advice that many students receive, one thing that may remain confusing is the question of what skills employers in 2025 value most.

After all, resumes and professional networks are important. But to stand out in an increasingly competitive job market, students need to demonstrate that they have the skills and knowledge employers need.

So what are those skills, and how can students build them?

## Hard Skills

Hard skills are skills that people learn through education and practice. Here are some particularly important ones to consider for the 2025 job market.

### Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence, or AI, is a force already shaping employment. According to a 2024 article by Kristalina Georgieva, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, AI has impacted nearly 40% of employment around the world, and in highly developed economies, it may affect approximately 60% of jobs. No matter which field students are going into, it will be important for them to understand the impacts of AI and develop a user-level knowledge of it.

### Programming Skills

Computer programming skills are highly in-demand. According to a 2024 Forbes article by Alejandro Osés, the most valuable computer languages to know are SQL, Python and Java. Those languages may sound intimidating, but learning more about them does not have to be. To gain a better understanding of SQL, Python and Java, students do not have to be Computer Science majors or even enrolled in Computer Science classes. By simply taking an introductory course online, students can learn the basics and set themselves up for greater success in the job market. LinkedIn Learning has similar courses that students can access.

Even students not going into computer science or technological fields can benefit from having some basic knowledge of programming. Computer programs are often used to analyze data, and data analysis is a key component of many jobs, not just those in technology. Learning programming also builds strong analytical skills that are useful in any occupation.

### Foreign Language

As the workplace becomes increasingly globalized, it will be more and more important for those entering the job market to know, or at least start learning, another language. Those who speak another language have greater

opportunities for communication. According to Deborah Evans, a former writing consultant at the Ross School of Business, knowing or learning another language also shows respect for other people and their cultures.

“It shows that you’re interested in learning about another culture and that you’ve demonstrated an appreciation for cultural differences, which is useful in our globalized economy,” said Evans.

## Soft Skills

Just as important as hard skills are soft skills, which refer to social and emotional skills and personal characteristics. Here are some of the most critical soft skills for success in the 2025 job market.

### Adaptability

According to Osés, adaptability is one of the most in-demand skills in 2025. The world is changing rapidly, and so is the workplace. Those stepping into their careers must be able to adapt to those changes by keeping an open mind and viewing mistakes as learning experiences. “Maintaining an open mindset to experimentation is key,” writes Osés.

### Enthusiasm

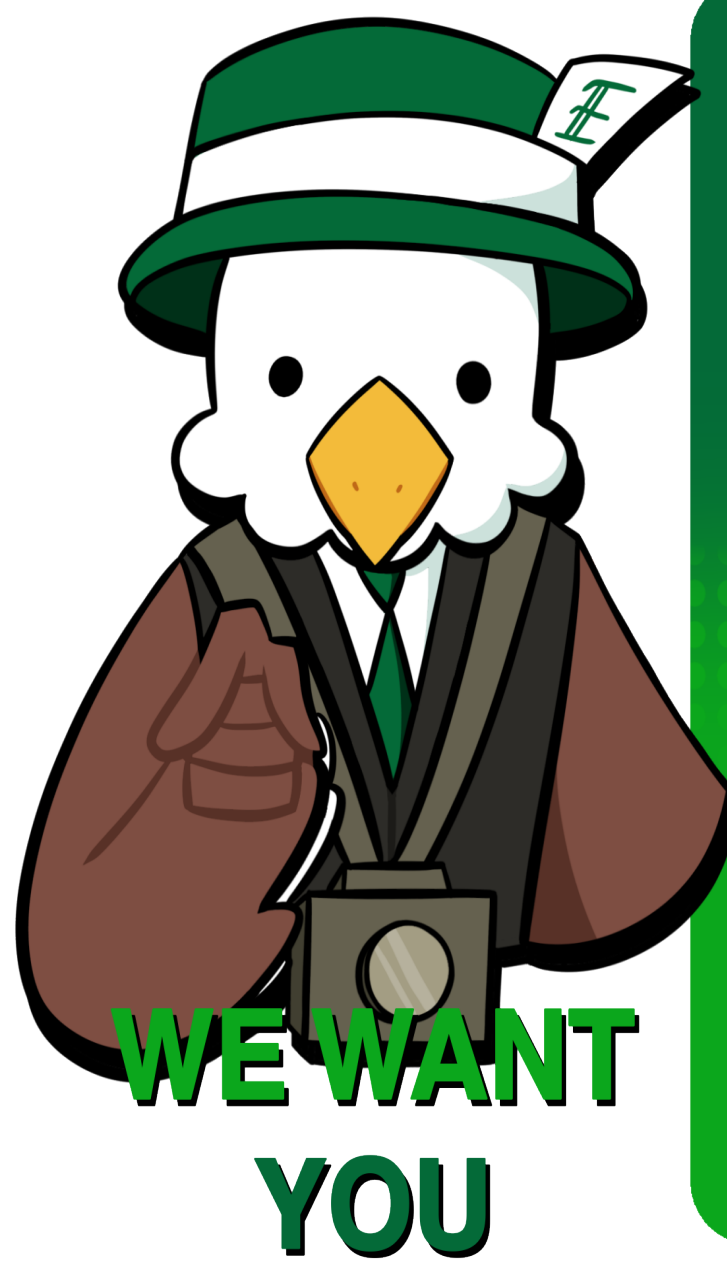
Enthusiasm is an especially important soft skill for students and recent graduates. They may not have years of work experience, but by showing enthusiasm about the fields they want to pursue, they can show employers that they are interested, engaged and committed to doing their best work. According to a 2024 publication from the U.S. Office of Disability Employment Policy, candidates who show enthusiasm during their interview process are more likely to make a positive impression on their interviewers and employers.

### Resilience

Problems are part of life. What can set people apart is how they respond to those problems. In life and in the workplace, it is important to demonstrate resilience by bouncing back from difficulties and continuing to move forward.

According to Evans, “Resilience is probably the most important characteristic for success in the workplace. Employers are looking for flexible, adaptable people who can roll with the punches, bounce back from adversity and tackle the next challenge.”

Finding a job in 2025’s competitive market can be stressful, but there are many things students can do to help themselves stand out as strong candidates. One of the most important steps they can take is developing the skills that will help them stand out. As students learn, grow and nurture those skills, they can look ahead to a bright future.



## The Eastern Echo

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# EMU baseball beats Akron, sweeping the 3-game series

*Hugh Thorp  
Sports Reporter*

The Eastern Michigan University baseball program was on the road for a three-game weekend series at Akron, March 7-9.

Eastern Michigan won all three against Akron, making it the first time they have swept an opponent in a three-game series since they won three consecutive games in a weekend series against Northern Illinois at Oestrike Stadium, May 18-20, 2023.

With the series beginning on Friday, Eastern won the first game by a score of 6-5. Their offense was alive again, scoring six runs and getting 10 hits while drawing five walks. The win was EMU’s fifth win of the season, and they moved to 5-6 (1-0 MAC) for 2025.

Eastern would also win the second game, 12-5, to improve to 2-0 in conference play after trailing by four runs during the early part of the game.

The sweep was completed by a 9-2 victory behind 15 Eagle hits on Sunday.

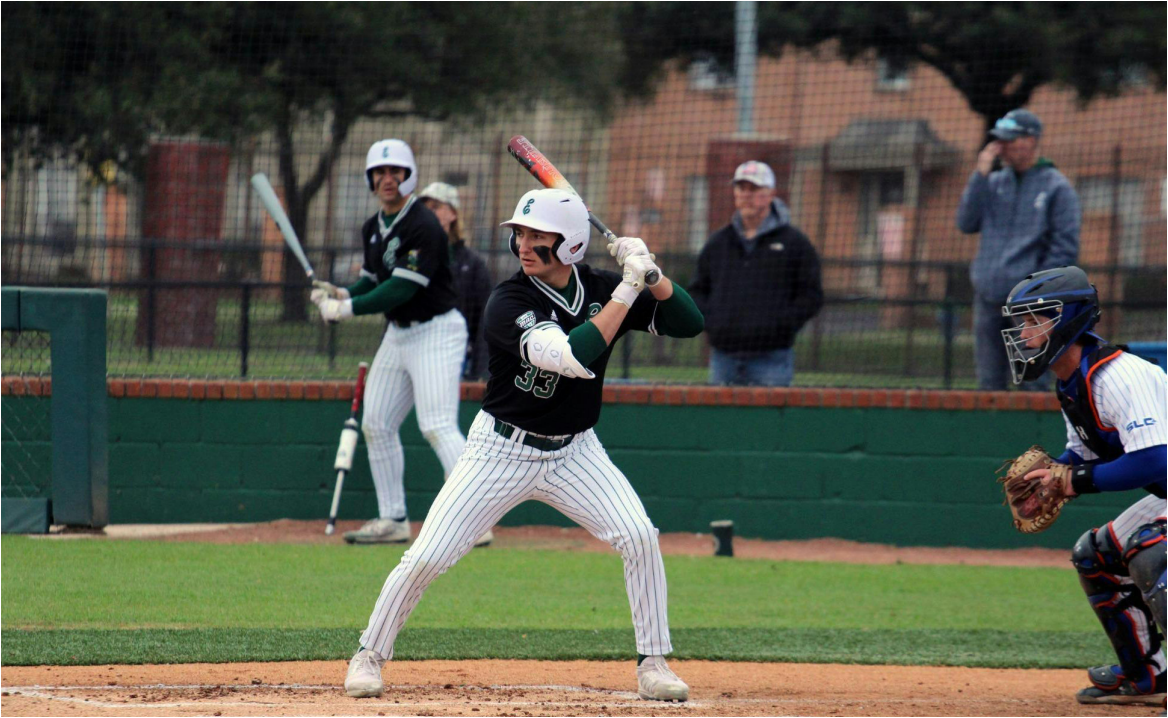
Eastern Michigan’s offense had three players get multi-hit games, including Logan Hugo (Essexville, Mich.), Cooper Vance (New Waterford, Ohio), and Giano Zuccaro (Middleburg Heights, Ohio), with Hugo and Vance having three hits and Zuccaro with two.

The Eagles had just two extra-base hits despite their offense controlling most of the game. Hugo hit a solo home run to left, and Zuccaro had a double. The right-handed hitting outfielder has three home runs this season and a .405 batting average.

The game was tied at three after seven innings in a back-and-forth battle until the eighth inning. In the eighth inning, EMU had multiple runners get on base with only one out via walk, single, or hit by pitch. The score was broken open when a fielder’s choice throwing error happened on Akron’s part to give the Eagles a 5-3 lead. Another hit by pitch helped the Eagles go up 6-3, highlighting how they won the first game.

Pitching in the opener was not at its best, but it was enough to give Eastern Michigan the win. Drew Beckner (Westerville, Ohio) was the hurler, and he pitched four innings, allowing three runs and nine hits, but he did have seven strikeouts.

The bullpen came in and replaced him in the fifth inning. Niko Kruezer (Westerville, Ohio), Drew Norris (Leawood, Kan.), and Ethan Davis (Brownstown, Ind.) pitched a combined 5 innings allowing two runs on just three hits. Davis picked up his first save of the season, and Norris picked up his



**Eagles junior Drew Jones prepares for pitch during a game against Akron. The Eagles swept Akron in a three-game weekend series Friday, Saturday and Sunday, March 7-9, in Ohio.** *Courtesy of EMU Athletics*

first win.

Game Two was also hitter-friendly, just like game one. Eastern Michigan had 10 hits as a team, with the highlight being a grand slam by Devin Zirwas (Imperial, Pa.). It busted EMU’s lead open to 9-4 after it was 5-4 before the swing. The home run came in the sixth inning after the Eagles were scoreless in the first four innings. Ironically, the swing was the only one the Eagles had for extra bases.

In addition to Zirwas, EMU had two other players record multi-hit games, including John Hale (Ashland City, Tenn.) and Ty Stecko (North Huntingdon, Pa.), each having two singles.

Tyler Kapa (Waterford, Mich.) was the starter for EMU, and he threw 4 ½ innings. He allowed four runs, seven hits, and four walks, but he did strike out six batters. Fischer Hendershot (Flushing, Mich.) was the difference out of the bullpen for the Eagles. He pitched 3, innings, struck out five, and allowed just one run. It was good enough to pick up his first save of the season.

The series’ final game was where Eastern Michigan showed up on offense the most. The bats tallied 15 hits in a blowout 9-2 win over Akron to sweep the series. Every player in Eastern Michigan’s lineup had a hit, and six had multi-hit games.

Among the Eagles players who had an impactful performance were Drew Jones (Cleveland, Ohio) and

Logan Hugo (Essexville, Mich.), who had a three-run home run and a double for Eastern Michigan’s extra-base hits.

Although the Eagles won the game handily, Akron got themselves the early lead, scoring a first-inning run to go ahead 1-0. The top of the second was where the Eagles offense came on. After Jones homered, the Eagles would score a combined five runs over the next three innings to get in control 8-1. Akron would only score one run for the remainder of the contest, which came in the eighth inning.

For EMU, Bobby Jones (Loveland, Ohio) took the ball to start the game. He pitched four innings and allowed just one earned run. He was replaced by Nick Keane (Harrisburg, Pa.) and Ethan Davis (Brownstown, Ind.), who combined pitched five innings and allowed just one run. Davis picked up his second save of the season, while Keane got his first win.

Up Next  
Eastern Michigan will stay on the road to take on Ohio State for one game in Columbus. The first pitch is at 3 p.m. ET. They will play their first home game on March 21, against Miami, after six consecutive weeks away from home due to cold temperatures.

For more coverage on the Eastern Michigan University baseball program, check out The Echo’s website.

## Eagle Sports Tips & Tales: March 11-17

*Elena Davis  
Sports Editor*

Eastern Michigan athletes are gearing up for a week of high-stakes games, and competitive tournaments.

From baseball showdowns to intense tennis action and gymnastics battles, there will be some action for fans to cheer.

Here’s a breakdown of the must-see events this week:

### Baseball at Ohio State

At 3 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, the baseball team faces Ohio State in Columbus.

This high-energy matchup is a critical, early-season contest as the Eagles look to make a statement in a non-conference game.

### Tennis vs Saginaw Valley State

At 1 p.m. Friday, March 14, the tennis team returns to Ypsilanti for a home match against Saginaw Valley State. It’s an opportunity for the Eagles to showcase their skills at home and start the season strong.

### Baseball at Western Michigan

The baseball team will play Western Michigan in Kalamazoo, Michigan, at 3 p.m. Friday, March 14.

This game is vital for both teams as they build momentum heading into the heart of the season.

### Gymnastics vs Ball State

Gymnastics fans won’t want to miss the Eagles’ matchup against Ball State in Ypsilanti, set for 6 p.m. Friday, March 14.

With high-flying routines and fierce competition, it’s sure to be an action-packed evening.

### Baseball at Western Michigan

The baseball team continues its series against Western Michigan at 1 p.m. Saturday, March 15, in Kalamazoo. This is another big game for the Eagles as they look to take control of the series.

### Baseball at Western Michigan

The baseball team plays the final game of its series against Western Michigan at 1 p.m. Sunday, March 16, in Kalamazoo.

It’s a crucial matchup to finish out the series on a high note and head into the next part of the season with confidence.

### Tennis at Northern Illinois

On March 16 at 1 p.m., the tennis team heads to DeKalb, Illinois, to face Northern Illinois. It’s an exciting road match for the Eagles, as they look to continue their strong season.

### Women’s Golf at Betsy Rawls Longhorn Invitational

Monday and Tuesday, March 17-18, the women’s golf team competes at the Betsy Rawls Longhorn Invitational in Austin, Texas.

This prestigious tournament brings together top teams from across the country, and the Eagles are ready to shine on the big stage.

### Eagles men's basketball heads to MAC Tournament

Marking its first postseason appearance since 2020, the EMU men's basketball team is headed to the Mid-American Conference Tournament, set for March 13-15. Seeded at No. 7, Eastern's first game is Thursday, March 13, at Rocket Arena in Cleveland. The Eagles will play No. 2 see Miami University. Game time is set for 4:30 p.m. Tickets, \$43 for adults and \$15 for students, can be purchased through the Eastern Michigan University Athletics website: EMUEagles.com/tickets.

# Men's basketball surrenders late lead, marks 16 turnovers in loss to Kent State

*Caleb Henderson  
Sports Reporter*

The Eastern Michigan University men’s basketball program fell to Kent State on Friday, March 7, losing 76-69, after leading 67-65 with 3:45 to play.

Eastern Michigan concluded the regular season at 16-15 overall and 9-9 in Mid-American Conference play. The loss was just their second in the last seven games, as they were 11-13. So, the Eagles are on their way to Cleveland for the Mid-American Conference tournament.

In Friday's game, the Eagles led for 21 minutes, including their largest lead of the game, 57-43, with 11:50 to play.

The loss extended EMU's drought of not having a winning season in league play to seven years.

Kent State controlled the early part of the game, leading 20-7 at the 13:22 mark of the first half.

After this, Eastern Michigan brought itself back, tying the game at 26 with 4:29 to play in the half. The

Eagles went to the locker room up 36-31, closing the half on an 18-5 run.

The second half started with Eastern getting further ahead. At the 13:15 mark, they built their lead to 52-40, shortly before their largest lead of the game, 57-43, came.

After being up by 14, the lead began to vanish. They scored only 12 points, being outscored 33-12 against the Golden Flashes. Despite losing the lead for much of the second half, EMU held this title until the 3:09 mark, when the Flashes made a three-pointer.

After EMU had a trip to the line and only made one free throw to tie the game at 68, Kent State made two more baskets and then eventually eight after some free throws were made.

EMU hit two free throws after this point to make it 76-70, but that was all there was remaining time for as the Green and White dropped another contest to Kent State. Kent State is the only program that swept EMU in the regular season.

EMU was led by three players that were in double figures.

This includes Christian Henry (Chicago, Illinois), Jalin Billingsley (Cleveland, Ohio), and Yusuf Jihad, (Farmington Hills, Michigan), who had 18, 15, and 14 points for Eastern Michigan, respectively. Billingsley pulled down eight rebounds, while Henry had six assists. Henry also had two blocks to add to his game stat-wise.

Eastern Michigan as a team struggled with keeping the basketball. The offense allowed 16 turnovers, which the Golden Flashes converted for 21 points.

On the positive side, Eastern went 17-for-18 from the free-throw line, their second-best total for the 2024-25 season. They scored 31 points off the bench, in contrast to Kent State’s 25. Eastern Michigan also scored more points in the paint than Kent State, leading this category 26-24.

Up next, Eastern Michigan's first game of the single-elimination MAC Tournament, where it will play Miami University at Rocket Arena in Cleveland.

Tip-off is set for 4:30 p.m. The game will be streaming live on ESPN+.

# Women's basketball ends regular season with homecourt loss

*Caleb Henderson  
Sports Reporter*

The Eastern Michigan women’s basketball team wrapped up its 2024-25 season by losing to Bowling Green 87-67 at home.

With the loss, the Eagles dropped to 2-27 (1-17 MAC) to close out the first season with head coach Sahar Nusseibeh at the helm. While the year didn’t go as planned for the squad, Nusseibeh praised her players’ fight until the bitter end.

“Extremely proud of our women and their efforts tonight, and really all

season,” Nusseibeh said. “It’s really easy to look at our record and assume that we would quit, and there was never quit in any one of these players. So really, really proud of them.”

Leading the way in scoring yet again for the Eagles was Sisi Eleko (Montreal, Quebec/New Hope Academy/Canisius) with 19 points and eight rebounds. The true junior capped off her historic campaign averaging 17.9 points and 10.1 boards as just the third player in program history to average a double-double in a season.

Olivia Smith (Montreal, Quebec/New Hope Academy/Canisius) also contributed 18 points thanks to an

electric start to the third quarter, which saw the guard put up 14 points in less than five minutes and make four straight three-pointers during that span.

In addition, fellow junior Brooklyn Thrash (Wayne, Ohio/Elmwood/Canisius) added 14 points of her own, 10 of those coming from the free-throw line.

The final home game of the season for the Eagles also featured the last send-off for four seniors on the team: Olivia Westphal (Bethel Park, Pennsylvania/Bethel Park/Duquesne), Mackenzie Amalia (Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania/Blackhawk/Canisius), Ashley Hassett (Hershey, Nebraska/

Hershey/Northeast CC), and Kyndal Lewis (Belton, Missouri/Belton).

Team manager Lexie Mesuch was also honored in her final game for holding that role.

Coach Nusseibeh did not hold back praise when reflecting on the impact losing those key upperclassmen will have on the team’s outlook heading into next year.

“They modeled the way — [but] now the women who are returning can reflect back on how they modeled the way and now step up and lead in that,” Nusseibeh said.



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# Lady Gaga unleashes maddeningly good pop music with 'Mayhem'

Frank Remski  
Review Columnist

Five years since her last pop record, Lady Gaga has returned to the dance floor with “Mayhem.” Preceded by the hit singles “Abracadabra,” “Disease,” and “Die With a Smile” with Bruno Mars, “Mayhem” is a synthpop record that bent and played around with genre. It explored themes of love and desire with some monster-related imagery.

## Review

Gaga’s been inconsistent with her pop output since 2013’s “Artpop.” In the past 12 years, she has released only one pure pop record, 2020’s “Chromatica,” which spawned the hit song “Rain On Me” with Ariana Grande. In this time, Gaga has been busy with acting and other music. She starred in the films “House of Gucci” and “Joker: Folie à Deux,” and released various musical projects, including a jazz album with the late Tony Bennett and music for “Top Gun: Maverick” and “Joker: Folie à Deux.”

Review: ‘Joker: Folie à Deux’ takes the audience to be a fool

Although “Mayhem” was marketed with a dark, Gothic vibe from its aesthetic, singles, and fashion, it was actually not a dark pop album. The record was overall more joyful and upbeat. As such, some fans may want to adjust their expectations.

## Highs

“Mayhem” was an apt title due to how diverse and eclectic the record was; there was something for everyone. Those who enjoyed Gaga’s older songs with infectious hooks that play around with syllables will adore “Abracadabra” and “Garden of Eden.” Those who enjoyed the more sleek production of “Chromatica” will love “Vanish Into You” and “Don’t Call Tonight.”

But “Mayhem” wasn’t just a rehash of Gaga’s

latest hits. The satirical take on fame in the song “Perfect Celebrity” had a rock edge. “How Bad Do U Want Me” was reminiscent of Taylor

classic.

Nearly the entire record was infectiously catchy. Gaga understood the key to making an enjoyable



Swift’s best pop songs such as “Cruel Summer” and “Blank Space” with its witty lyricism and storytelling. “Zombieboy” had the potential to become a dynamic, disco-esque Halloween

hook and cramming multiple into each song. To add onto the catchiness, there was a maximalist production style that made the songs deeply immersive. Gaga’s vocals were also powerful, as

to be expected.

Although a record this eclectic could easily become a difficult, uneasy listen, the tracklisting was genius. The songs were ordered in such a way that they were never jarring, while allowing the record to morph and flow into different moods and sounds.

## Lows

The one jarring song on “Mayhem” was its closer, “Die With a Smile.” The collaboration with Bruno Mars was a slower, soft-rock ballad. Although its lyricism fit on “Mayhem,” which mostly was about love, especially the extreme, magical kind, it’s sound had no place in an album of infectious synthpop. It would have worked better as a standalone song, especially as “Blade of Grass” was a more appropriate closer.

Towards the end, the record overall began to lose steam. After the incredible “How Bad Do U Want It,” and “Don’t Call Tonight”, the album moved into the less memorable “Shadow of a Man” and the mellower “The Beast” and “Blade of Grass.” These were not bad songs, they simply didn’t reach the highs of most of “Mayhem.”

## Verdict

“Mayhem” brought many great new songs to the Gaga canon. It wasn’t obvious what will be the next single from “Mayhem” as so many songs had hit potential. It struck a great balance between songs reminiscent of old hits and expanding Gaga’s pop sounds.

Rating: 9 out of 10

Frank Remski is a film and theater reviewer for The Eastern Echo. He is majoring in media studies and journalism and minoring in public relations. He has worked for The Echo since summer of 2023 and has written both news stories and opinion pieces.

# 'The Monkey' is a gory Stephen King adaptation

Mariam Fakhreddine  
Review Columnist

“The Monkey,” directed by Oz Perkins, is based on a short story by Stephen King. This film was recently released in theaters, featuring Theo James as Hal and Bill and Oz Perkins as Chip Zimmer.

## Review

This film is about a cursed, wind-up toy monkey that is dangerous. This monkey brings terrible luck to innocent people who turn the key. The main characters involved are these twin boys named Hal and Bill. The toy monkey was their fathers; these boys started turning the key. This key caused the deaths of people connected to their lives. The deaths were caused by freak accidents that were horrific and inhumane.

## Highs

There were minimal highs of this film. The primary high point of this film is the acting of Theo James, who plays both characters Bill and Hal. Hal is more composed and quiet, whereas Bill is dramatic and foolish. His performance portrayed compelling emotions such as the trauma

and guilt that he experienced as a child. The struggles he faces are shown perfectly. As Bill, he possessed the perfect level of dark comedy, which kept the audience full of laughter. James made this film better with his acting skills.

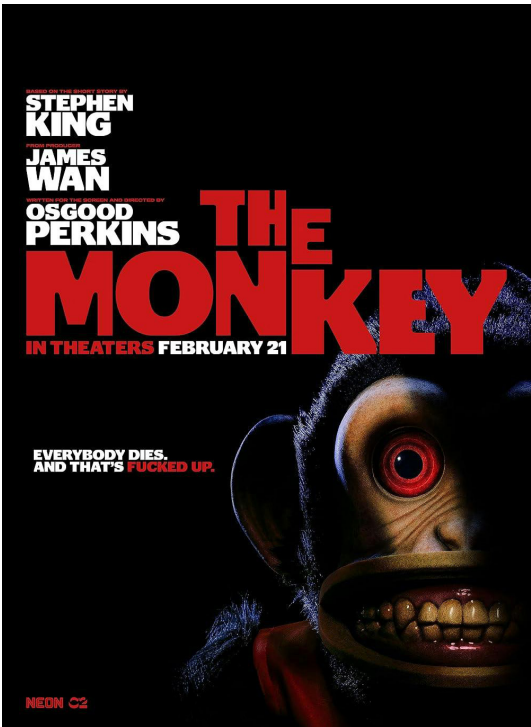
The dark humor kept the audience intrigued, which was a high point. It was hilarious, more than a typical horror film. The dark humor was captured interestingly and portrayed well, considering it can be challenging to perfect.

The film’s scenery was as expected for a horror film, as it took place in a creepy town.

## Lows

The tone was inconsistent throughout the film due to the mixture of horror and comedy. It was missing more aspects of horror; it was more gory than scary. The gore was too intense and hard to watch. Having guts flying and deaths portrayed in the most horrific ways could make the audience uninterested.

The dialogue was poorly written, making it difficult to understand the plot through the conversation. It was not unique and did not add anything special to the film. Good writing is essential in horror films. The dialogue keeps the audience interested, but there are also few



jumpscare. The film would have been better with better writing and jumpscare.

The lack of character depth is low; Hal’s twin

brother Bill is not described well. It was hard to understand his motive and why he was determined to murder his brother, Hal. The lack of emotional depth was lacking; their family did not care for the boys after their mother passed away.

Their mother Lois, played by Tatiana Maslany, was also a low because she had a sense of responsibility. She was too blunt and not a motherly figure. She was an unlikable character who was more morbid with her sons. She would tell her son unnecessary things and speak too much about death, which specifically scared Hal.

## Verdict

“The Monkey” is not worth the watch, considering how terrible the dialogue is. Theo James was the only highlight in this film; his acting never fails, but the plot was not captured well.

Rating: 4.5 out of 10

Mariam Fakhreddine is a film and theater reviewer for The Eastern Echo. She has worked as a news and features reporter for The Echo for two years.

# Netflix's original series, 'Valeria,' streams its final season

“Valeria,” directed by Inma Torrente, is a Netflix original that just released its final season.

## Review

The series is based on the novel “En los Zapatos de Valeria” by Elisabet Benavent. This season is full of comedy and beautiful friendship developments.

This series is about four best friends and their adventures in life. This season is about Valeria (Diana Gomez) having writer’s block with her new novel. This new relationship with Brun (Federico Aguado) from that last season presents her with challenges. Valeria also reconnects with Victor (Maxi Iglesias), and she develops a friendship with him. Carmen (Paula Malia) was pregnant in the previous season; she discovered balancing motherhood and work. Nerea (Teresa Riott) begins a new relationship with Georgina (Mima Rieria) and wants to get an apartment together. Lola (Silma Lopez)is struggling with her relationship and balancing it with her latest promotion.

## Highs

This final season gives the audience the



conclusions of each of the character’s final journeys. Their character development and growth were significant in this season, showing how they matured from their previous challenges. Specifically, Valeria and Victor’s relationship development was beautifully done, giving fans the intense reconnection needed.

Victor matures into a different man from the previous seasons; he is no longer a player and wants a real commitment with Valeria. He decides to have a friendship with her that is true and pure. The emotional maturity he portrays is necessary and critical for his character’s growth.

This season stays genuine in the main themes of self-discovery, love, development, and the strength of female friendships. It has humorous moments while providing meaningful life lessons. Lola’s character growth was significant; she was always scared to have a real relationship. But she breaks through her fear and chooses to be happy with Rai (Jose Pastor).

## Lows

There were minimal lows in this final season. The main low was how short the episodes were

in which made some of the character development felt rushed. There should’ve been more growth with Nerea and Carmen. Their stories felt a bit rushed and underdeveloped.

The show’s pacing was low because there would be more fast-paced episodes, which gave an inconsistent aspect. It was a predictable season for Valeria and Victor’s relationship. Valeria was having trouble with Bruno, a more immature character who only cared about his writing. He never supported Valeria and was not a good partner for her.

## Verdict

“Valeria” was worth the watch, considering the development of the characters in this final season. It gave the audience a conclusion to all the girls’ stories.

Rating: 7 out of 10

Mariam Fakhreddine is a film and theater reviewer for The Eastern Echo. She has worked as a news and features reporter for The Echo for two years.



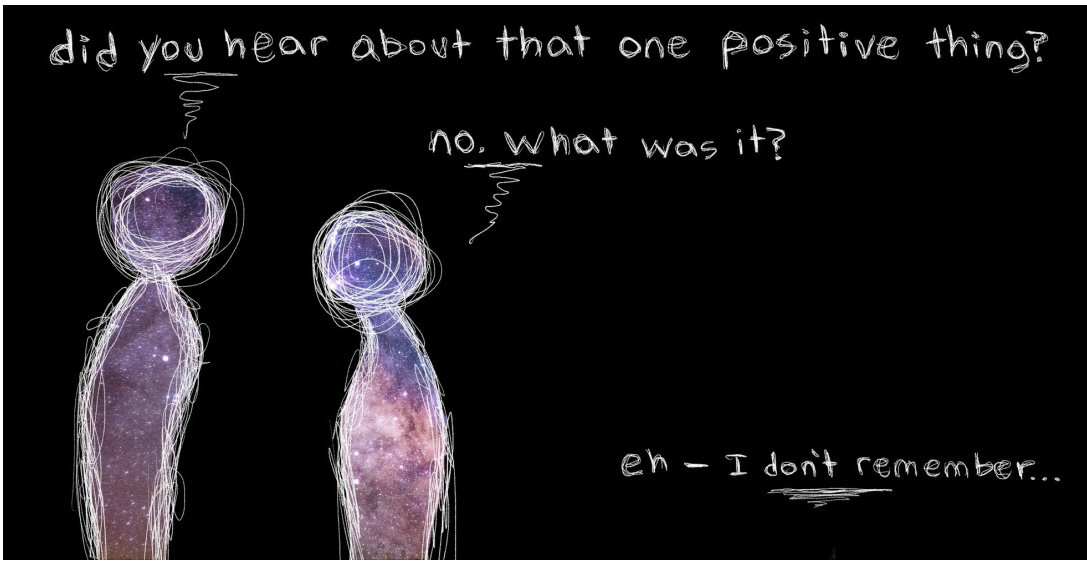
WONDERCORD x Gideon the Ghost (Pt.4 + 5)

Rylee Curley  
Design Chief

Engravings VI  
Gideon the Ghost  
Comics Artist



Engravings VII  
Gideon the Ghost  
Comics Artist



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# A week of events at EMU - In photos!

Gallery compiled by Photo Editor Max Taylor



Students and staff painting rocks during the Create Corner event in the DEI room in the Student Center as part of EMU LGBTRC's Pride Week on Wednesday, March 5th. / Owen Cardenas



Examples of rocks hand painted by students during the Create Corner event in the Student Center for Pride Week on Wednesday, March 5th. / Owen Cardenas



A round of Texas Holdem during the King's Casino event in the Student Center Ballroom on Wednesday, March 5th. / Kaleb Stanely



A group of students enjoying their time at the King's Casino event in the Student Center Ballroom on Wednesday, March 5th / Kaleb Stanely



EMU Choir during their Limits and Imaginary Lines concert in Pease Auditorium on Friday, March 7th. / Kaleb Stanely



A blackjack dealer preparing their table at the King's Casino event in the Student Center Ballroom on Wednesday, March 5th. / Kaleb Stanely